Rev. Margo Kagoora
c/o Rev. Jean Galley
Apt. 402
5607 La Mirada St.
Los Angeles, CA 90038

THANK YOU

Dear Margo,

What a pleasure to have you as an enabler and impromptu panelist! Thank you!

A contribution will be made to All Saints MCC as a token of appreciation for MCC's involvement.

Shalom! Chris

THIS PARTIAL REPRINT OF MORE LIGHT HAS NOT BEEN PRINTED
AT THE EXPENSE OF PRESBYTERIANS FOR GAY CONCERNS.

More Light

FOR ALL PRESBYTERIANS
CONCERNED FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MEN

NEWSLETTER 39

JAN-FEB, 1980

LAZARUS

-A FULL REPORT-

THE LAZARUS PROJECT IS THE ONLY FULLY-FUNDED PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRY WITHIN THE GAY COMMUNITY.

IN THIS ARTICLE, CHRIS GLASER, DIRECTOR OF THE LAZARUS PROJECT, REPORTS ON ITS FIRST TWO YEARS.

THE LAZARUS PROJECT

What is the Lazarus Project?

The Lazarus Project is a non-judgmental outreach ministry with gay persons within the community of West Hollywood and its surrounding communities of Hollywood, Silver Lake, Beverly Hills and Studio City, each containing high concentrations of gay people. The purpose of the Project is to integrate gay people within the worshipping life of the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church, provide pastoral counseling, and work for social justice, as well as provide interpretation of the ministry to the broader church community.

The raising of Lazarus from his tomb provides one of the richest biblical images for Jesus' call to all of us to reject our "rest-in-peace" desires and come out of our tombs, our boxes and our closets to live the abundant life Jesus claimed to bring. We find ourselves playing the roles of each of the characters in the drama: sometimes we are Martha, full of faith but also very practical in reminding Jesus opening the tomb would cause a stink; sometimes we are Lazarus, in need of resurrection, new life, and open communion with our neighbors; sometimes we are the neighbors, commanded by Jesus to roll the stone from the tomb and unbind the paralyzing death cloths suffocating Lazarus; and sometimes we are truly the Body of Christ, shouting "Come out!" to Lazarus, encouraging him to claim his rights and responsibilities as a child of God. Too often in our experience, we have witnessed the Church play Martha rather than the Body of Christ.

There is clear universality represented in this brief story. But because the image of Lazarus' resurrection parallels the image for gay folk of "coming out of the closet"--a self-chosen phrase meaning coming to a point of self-affirmation as gay folk and seeking affirmation from family, friends and society--the name was chosen for a ministry within the gay community from within the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church. The purpose of the Lazarus Project is to integrate gay folk within the worshiping life of the congregation, provide pastoral counseling, work for social justice and provide interpretation of the ministry to the broader church community. Over two years in existence, the Project has already addressed these general goals and continues to do so.

The West Hollywood Presbyterian Church itself is a mission church, supported largely by the Presbytery of the Pacific. It began as a more traditional church, but with the flight to the suburbs and the aging of the membership, the congregation dwindled. When the old sanctuary was razed 16 years ago, Presbytery decided to build two smaller structures on the valuable Sunset Boulevard property to house both the small worshiping community as well as any community programs initiated by the congregation under the leadership of their pastor, the Rev. Dr. Ross Greek. To this day, the theme of the church has been, "For Worship and Witness."

A prophet of his time, Dr. Ross Greek (who holds a Ph.D. in counseling from USC) led the congregation into a variety of ministries which would associate his name and the church's with

copyright 1980 by Chris Glaser all rights reserved

controversy for two decades. Ross opened the church doors to the thousands of street folk who populated the Sunset Strip area during the explosive sixties. The congregation was officially designated Presbytery's Peace Center during the Vietnam war. It became perhaps the first Presbyterian congregation to incorporate dance in its creative approach to worship with the help of dancer Marge Champion. It has been the birthplace of programs which have included the Los Angeles Free Clinic, halfway houses for drug addicts, emotionally disturbed adolescents, and ex-offenders, and recently received a $30,000 grant for a Presbytery-directed halfway house for female prostitutes. The Lazarus Project needs to be placed in the perspective of this history.

Ministry within the gay community has long been part of the congregation's program. In fact, gay folk have been part of the church's leadership for the last twenty years. Only in recent years, as West Hollywood becomes more and more a gay ghetto, has the church embarked on specific attempts at outreach to that segment of the population.

I first met Ross Greek the day I was to leave Los Angeles for my final year of seminary at Yale Divinity School. I had just been appointed to the denomination's Task Force to Study Homosexuality, and Jeanne Marshall, then Chairperson of the Advisory Council on Church and Society, alerted Ross as to my availability as a possible resource for his ministry within the gay community. His primary question was basic: How do you church gays? How do you make them feel that this is also <u>their</u> church, without being paternalistic? During our discussion, I expressed interest in doing some volunteer work with the church upon my return to California after graduation from seminary and explore with the congregation ways of making gay people feel welcome. The following Christmas vacation I again found myself sitting in Ross's office for what I expected would be a social visit. From the moment our conversation began, Ross discussed ways in which the church might be able to pay me on a part-time basis to work there. Days later, the then-Synod Executive Wally Gibbs encouraged us to write a request for full funding from the UPCUSA Mission Development Committee. Rev. Gibbs had been sensitized to the issue because he had served in David Sindt's presbytery during the time David was founding Presbyterians for Gay Concerns.

A proposal was written, rewritten by the staff of the Synod of Southern California, rewritten yet again by a committee of Pacific Presbytery. The proposal gained immediate unanimous approval of the Session of West Hollywood Presbyterian. Months later it was finally presen ted and approved by a two-thirds majority of Pacific Presbytery.

The Project originally had been slated to begin midsummer of 1977. But our denomination, always judicious and proper, can not always move as swiftly as human need might wish. The Mission Development Committee would not meet till November, and so the Project had been rescheduled to begin in January of 1978. Because I was available and the congregation was willing to make the financial sacrifice, I was hired at $750-a-month to do what was called preparatory work for the Project in August, 1977. In November, however, the Mission Development Committee balked on making a decision regarding the Project in favor of asking advice from the Program Agency Board, to whom they are responsible. That Board was not scheduled to meet till February, so Lazarus entered its first year without guarantee of national funding--the bulk of its first year's projected budget. In February the Program Agency Board referred Lazarus back to the Mission Development Committee, informing the committee it had the authority to make a decision on the proposal without further guidance. By conference call, an affirmative decision was made, guaranteeing the project $8000 for 1978, $6000 for 1979 and $4000 for 1980.

Sitting in my office at the church the day before I received word from the denomination's New York office that funding had been granted, I reflected on the possibility of a negative response to our request. I remember suddenly coming to the conclusion, "Whether or not funding is granted, I am here to stay. The Lazarus Project is here to stay." When the telephone call came from Dean Lewis that funding in fact had been granted, I may not have sounded as excited as might be expected because I knew, by that time, the funds didn't make any difference as to whether or not ministry within the gay community was going to happen at West Hollywood Presbyterian Church.

The original proposal of the Lazarus Project called for the formation of a core of twenty lay ministers to address the needs of the West Hollywood community, gay and nongay. This has been accomplished in the form of the Lazarus Steering Committee, a think tank and resource and energy reservoir which recognizes needs within our community and then creates and develops projects and programs to address those needs. It consists of members and friends of

photo by Dean Kaufman

SOME LAZARUS FOLK POSE FOR A "FAMILY PORTRAIT" WHILE ON RETREAT IN SANTA BARBARA.

the congregation, gay and non-gay as well as two members of Session. It meets monthly in conjunction with the Lazarus Advisory Council, which consists of a representative from Synod's Social and Ecumenical Concerns Commission, from Presbytery's Program Cabinet, and again, from the local church's Session. The Advisory Council was formed to keep open channels of communication and interpretation with those judicatories funding Lazarus. The Council members too are involved in creating, developing and carrying out the ministry of Lazarus.

What is Our Ministry?

First and perhaps foremost, our ministry is one of witness to the gay and Lesbian community that at least one mainline denomination has not forgotten their needs and gifts. We advertise in gay and Lesbian publications. We participate in gay and Lesbian events:for example, we marched in L.A.'s gay pride march last year, distributing 2000 helium-filled ballons which read, "West Hollywood Presbyterian, For Gay Folk Too," and staffed an information booth at the gay festival that weekend. We also create special events for the gay community such as "An Evening With Malcolm Boyd" and "The Effrontery of Walt Whitman" which contribute to positive self-images. These have also proved helpful fundraisers.

As Director of the Project, I find myself doing much counseling, formal and informal. People usuallly seek counseling from me in the areas of coming out; justifying being gay with being Christian; relationships with family, friends, and lover (the equivalent of "spouse" in heterosexual terminology); and questions on how and where to meet a partner.

As a congregation, we find ourselves serving as a support community for one another. In this regard, let me give three examples(names have been changed):

I first met George when we were both doing warm-up exercises in preparation for running. When he learned of my work at the church, he was stunned. Two years before he had simply turned his back on his Christian faith because of his homosexuality. He had been made to feel he had to choose one or the other. Now he was confronted with someone who had reconciled his sexuality and his faith. We talked on several occasions, but soon began an approach-avoidance relationship in which George would call for an appointment and then cancel at the last moment. I would occasionally see George while running or at a bar or at a social function, and I always encourgaed him to visit the church. Shortly before Christmas of this year, nearly two years after I had extended my first invitation to him to visit the church, George appeared at Sunday morning worship. He

has been attending since, and he feels encouraged being with other gay Christians as he continues the reconciliation of his faith and sexuality.

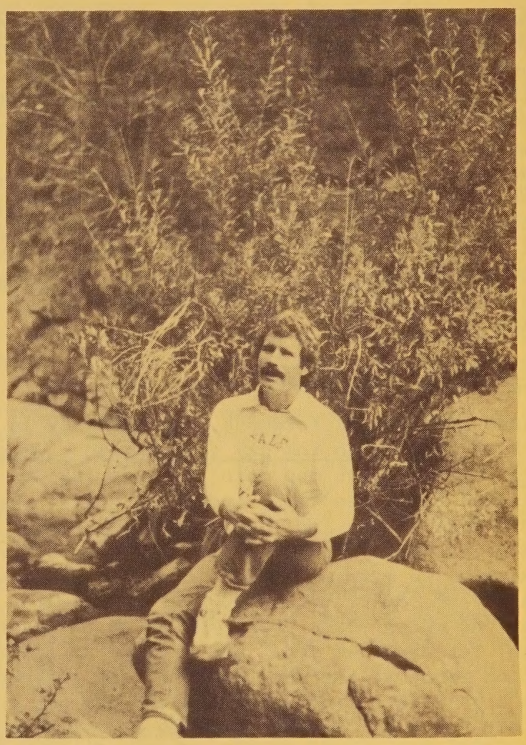
David began attending our church last fall with his lover with whom he had lived for 28 years. David is a professor at a local university. He had been an active Presbyterian, serving as an Elder in another church when the San Diego General Assembly made its negative pronouncement on the ordination of gay folk to elder, deacon and pastor. Discouraged, he dropped out of his church. Fortunately, the pastor of his church has been supportive of the Lazarus Project, and so encouraged him to visit our congregation. Eventually he did so, but three weeks after he began attending and had decided to move his membership, his lover died suddenly of a heart attack. Five of us from the congregation attended the funeral. David was quickly integrated within the family--members and friends of the church inviting him to gatherings as often as possible and demonstrating genuine concern. Later, he told his former pastor, "West Hollywood Presbyterian has been my salvation during this awful period."

Bill and Sam were high on one of the more lethal drugs available in our community. A gun was fired. Sam died on the bedroom floor. Bill attempted suicide by overdose. Sam's lover Walter found his body in a pool of dried blood nearly 24 hours later. Bill was found and taken to the hospital, under arrest for allegedly pulling the trigger. Both were members of the Great American Yankee Freedom Band (a 125-member all-gay band in Los Angeles). A member and deacon of our congregation knew the principals, and asked if the memorial service for Sam could be held at our church.

I counseled Walter, who had found his lover's body. I led the memorial service, which turned out to be a meaningful time of sharing feelings about the tragic incident. The Los Angeles Gay Men's Chorus provided music for the service. I visited Bill in the L.A. County Jail, learning that gay folk were not allowed to attend worship services conducted by the chaplain's office for "security reasons." Later this would lead one of the Lazarus Steering Committee members into action which has inspired our prison ministry (to be described later in this article). When Bill was released on his own recognizance, he became a regular attender at worship and Bible Study. In the midst of a time of great remorse and need for forgiveness, West Hollywood Presbyterian Church embraced Bill with God's grace.

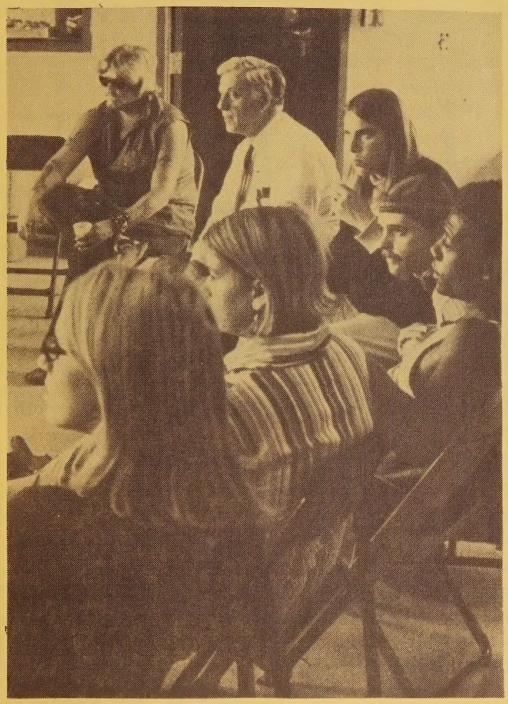
Our ministry provides an opportunity for spiritual growth. As Director, I lead Sunday morning worship services at least twice a month. One of the people brought in by the Project, Jim Tear, writes original songs for each service. Written into the original proposal was the expectation the Director would lead a Bible Study class, which I began shortly after I was hired and now meets Wednesday evenings at 7:30. Officially dubbed "God's Word to You...Your Words to God," the class emphasizes shared discussion and prayer as well as academic input on biblical passages and/or books within the Bible. The Lazarus Steering Committee recently made the decision that once a month another member should lead the class so that we might enjoy the diversity of talent and expertise available to us within our own congregation. The Rev. Dr. Howard Rice, Moderator of the General Assembly of our denomination, recently visited the group and appreciated the meaningful exchange of life stories in our discussion with him.

Lazarus sponsors two weekend retreats for the entire congregation each year. Last year's first retreat, held at the Big Bear Presbyteri-



LAZARUS PROJECT DIRECTOR CHRIS GLASER
AT SANTA BARBARA RETREAT
Photo by Dean Kauffman

PASTOR ROSS GREEK MEETING WITH STREET PEOPLE IN A DAILY RAP SESSION HELD IN THE CHURCH DURING THE LATE '60's AND EARLY '70's. Photo from Presbyterian Life, Nov.15, 1970.



an Conference Grounds, featured an exploration of the theology of creation. We used the text written by the Roman Catholic writer, Matthew Fox, Whee! We, wee All the Way Home...A Guide to the New Sensual Spirituality. One of the nongay church members who attended claimed her spiritual high of the weekend was the "unconditional positive regard" she experienced from the eleven others attending the retreat.

Our second retreat last year, a little more monastic in quality, was held at the Mount Calvary Retreat House in the hills above Santa Barbara, an Episcopal center run by the Order of the Holy Cross. In the midst of five worship services a day (two before breakfast!) and a Silence observed from 10 in the evening till after breakfast the next morning, the nineteen attending focused on the theme "We Are Family," using Scripture as a basis for discussing the family of faith and the extended family we are developing within our congregation.

Part of the development of any church family requires times for being together. So, part of our ministry includes simple socializing. After the coffee time which follows Sunday morning worship, many of us (as many as 24 on a given Sunday) go for brunch together, usually at a local restaurant and occasionally at someone's home. Potlucks sometimes occur Sunday afternoon or Wednesday nights before Bible Study. Of course there are the usual organized outings to the park, or the circus, or a play, which is a part of any church's social life.

Our ministry includes social action. Since we perceive ourselves also as a community center, we encourage groups to use our buildings either at no cost or at minimal donations to offset heating, lighting and maintenance expenses. Alcoholics Together (A.T.-A.A.), a counterpart to Alcoholics Anonymous for the gay alcoholic, meets in our Fellowship Hall on Monday and Wednesday nights, the latter meeting attracting over one-hundred persons. Ned Manderino leads drama workshops on Monday and Tuesday nights in our sanctuary/theater and occasionally creates showcase productions. A chamber music group of the Los Angeles Gay Men's Chorus has used the sanctuary for rehearsal; Growth Groups from the L.A. Gay Community Services Center have met in our buildings; the Los Angeles Gay Religious Coalition has used Fellowship Hall for meetings; a spiritually-oriented gay folk dance group meets Friday nights in Fellowship Hall; a local chapter of Evangelicals Concerned (for gay evangelicals and their friends) uses our facilities for monthly meetings; and recently a gay draft resistance group has planned a meeting here. These are just examples of the wide variety of groups which make use of our facilities.

Before Christmas, a member of our church who decided he didn't want to spend Christmas alone contributed $200 toward a Christmas Eve dinner which would mingle folk within the congregation with the teenagers of the Ed Boyle Home. Ed Boyle, a certified counselor, administers a county-funded halfway home for 6-8 gay adolescents, who range in age from 12 to 18. Occasionally I am invited to have dinner with the household, and then lead a rap session on religion and sexuality. Some of the young men attend our worship services. Always interested in enabling the young men to witness positive gay role models, Ed responded favorably to our invitation to the household and staff to join us Christmas Eve for our candlelight service and dinner (catered at cost by one of our own members). Since I've been trying to figure out a way to reach out in ministry with the male hustlers who string themselves along Santa Monica Blvd. (just south of the church), I recommended to the Steering Committee we invite these young men (who also range in age from 12 to 18) to join us as well. Four nights a week

TWO VIEWS OF THE CHURCH BUILDINGS. PALM TREE IN FRONT WAS PLANTED BY MARY PICKFORD.

for two weeks prior to the event, pairs of Lazarus folk walked along Santa Monica Blvd., personally handing out invitations to the male prostitutes. In our attempt to assure them religion would not be pushed on them, one young man asked, "If we want to talk about religion, is that okay?" Eight sent us first name RSVP's, but possibly because of heavy rains that night and the fact most of them walk rather than drive, only four appeared the evening of the event. A total of over forty persons enjoyed a warm and memorable evening together.

Many heterosexually-married gay or bisexual men feel committed to their wives and their children, yet also feel the need to be themselves. They have special needs for counsel and support Because I had met several such men in the course of my work at the church, I suggested they might serve as support for one another. So, once a month, they meet at my apartment for a potluck dinner. Already there has been a meaningful exchange of shared reflections and feelings. Hopefully the small group will grow as its existence becomes known.

As mentioned earlier in the article, our recent involvement in prison ministry grew out of personal contact with a gay person incarcerated at the Los Angeles County Jail, a facility which can accomodate 5000 men. Gay persons are kept separately from other inmates, and are denied privileges others enjoy because of the reported need for guards to "escort" gay prisoners to prevent harassment by other inmates. One of the denied privileges is the right to attend worship services conducted by prison chaplains. When Paul Butler of our Lazarus Steering Committee heard of this, he was incensed enough to explore the possibilities of special services with the Chaplain's Office. Some of the chaplains were sympathetic and helpful; the head chaplain, less than encouraging, still refers to gay inmates as "bulls" and "queens." With Paul working in cooperation with the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles (which had formerly been doing a prison ministry there some time ago), agreement was reached which enabled the first special service for gay inmates on Sunday morning, February 10--by coincidence the Sunday designated by last year's Presbyterian General Assembly as "Criminal Justice Sunday." Our Sunday morning service focused on this new area of ministry, and Paul reported on the jail service conducted earlier that morning. Eight people volunteered to serve on a rotating basis in leading the worship services alongside MCC representatives every Sunday morning at 9 a.m. Though sometimes facing difficult choices (one Sunday the men were give the choice of roof exercise privileges or going to the worship service), attendance has increased from 15 to 30 to 40 in the short weeks since the services began. Yet we are aware that our church must be involed in more than simple prison ministry; we understand the necessity of prison reform. The reported harassment of gay folk within the

County Jail is one more example of the perniciousness of our total penal system.

In addition to programs of social outreach, our ministry concerns itself with social justice. As Director, working within the No on 6 campaign (Proposition 6 would have removed gay schoolteachers and anyone who advocated gay rights from the state's educational system), I "produced" "An Ecumenical Service for Human Rights" at the Greek Theater (a large outdoor amphitheater) which featured Gospel singer Odetta, folksinger Peter Yarrow, writer Rev. Malcolm Boyd, founder of MCC Rev. Troy Perry, and a number of gay and nongay spiritual leaders (Jewish, Protestant, and Roman Catholic) who wished to voice opposition to Proposition 6. Primarily sponsored by the L.A. Gay Religious Coalition (of which Lazarus is a member), it served as a witness to the gay community that not all religious folk share the Bryant/Briggs mentality which would deny them civil rights. (See MORE LIGHT, Newsletter 33, Nov-Dec, 1978) Statements from congregations and presbyteries in California opposing Prop 6 also served as witness to Presbyterians' opposition.

Individual members of the church were involved in last October's March on Washington for gay and Lesbian civil rights; the congregation as a whole unanimously endor sed the subsequent March on Sacramento in January, and some of us marched as a group as rain drenched our bodies but not our spirits. Dean Kauffman from the Steering Committee was responsible for gaining endorsement for the march from the Social and Ecumenical Concerns Committees at both Presbytery and Synod levels. Later, after the death of the gay and Lesbian civil rights bill in the California legislature occurred when it was not voted out of committee, Pacific Presbytery was persuaded to vote their disapproval of the bill's demise and its hope for civil rights legislation which would protect gay persons in the areas of employment and housing.

When I first came to the church, it felt like most of my ministry involved interpretation, enabling Presbyterians to understand what it means to be gay and Christian and how important a ministry within the gay community is. The first year I was still serving on the national Task Force to Study Homosexuality, and, between Task Force meetings and interpretive work related to our report, I found myself away on long distance trips twice a month. Though I find myself traveling less, I nonetheless continue to devote much of my time toward interpretive work, speaking locally or writing articles.

The Lazarus Project hosts two conferencesper year designed for nongay Presbyterians (or any religious folk, gay or nongay) to help them understand the gay community and our ministry. Last year's conferences featured a variety of speakers, as well as personalized discussion groups enabled by Lazarus folk and a few friends from the local Metropolitan Community Church. Saturday's agenda included presentations in various areas, question/answer periods and small group discussions. Saturday night included visits to gay restaurants and

LAZARUS FOLK PASSING OUT BALLOONS ALONG A GAY PRIDE PARADE ROUTE IN WEST HOLLYWOOD LAST JUNE.

bars, and our last conference featured an evening concert of the 125-member Great American Yankee Freedom Band and the L.A. Gay Men's Chorus. Sunday includes worship with the congregation followed by a church potluck and further presentations. The 25-30 registrants who attended each conference and the dozen or more enablers expressed feelings of meaningful reconciliation by the end of each weekend. Small wonder that the theme of our next such conference on May 3-4 is Reconciliation. (For further information on that conference, please write us.)

During our last conference, many expressed the view that what had been shared needed to be taken to many more Presbyterians. And so, we have begun what is affectionately called "The Road Show." The Road Show is simply a panel of Lazarus folk sharing the work of the Project and personal histories. It already is responding to requests from congregations, mission units and presbyteries who want to know more about our ministry. The premiere of The Road Show has been scheduled during the morning services of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles on March 9th. That afternoon it will make a presentation to the Mission Unit 4 of which Covenant is a member. The following Tuesday it will make a pre-presbytery presentation in San Gabriel Presbytery.

To enable those who have not worshiped with us to enjoy some of our more creative approaches to worship, we produced "An Evening With West Hollywood Presbyterian" last fall. The event featured original music by Paul Bergen and by Jim Tear and dialogues I had written between such characters as Jesus Christ and Superman, Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, God and Satan, etc.

We also produce our own quarterly one-page newsletter known as LAZARUS RISING, carrying the current news of our work to members of the Lazarus Sustaining Community (folks who pledge Lazarus $10 a quarter) and distributed at Presbytery meetings and speaking engagements. The newsletter is currently edited by Steve Preston.

Finally, the media has favored us with some attention. Several newspaper articles and television interviews have let people know we are here. The gay press has done several articles as well.

Congregational Development

At a recent Presbytery meeting a man speaking on evangelism mentioned a pamphlet produced by the denomination on "what to do with the bored and apathetic church member." Reflecting on this, I realized I could think of no bored or apathetic church member in our congregation! We have a strong sense of mission, and the urgency we feel to spread good news makes us the most activist congregation I've ever been associated with. The "priesthood of all believers" is a reality as members of the congregation take it upon themselves to minister with one another and within the community. Committees, chaired by members of the Lazarus Steering Committee, are taking responsibility for events (like conferences and retreats) and special ministries (like the jail ministry and The Road Show) rather than looking solely to me to enable and lead. There is a feeling of community achievement.

The vitality we have gained through the Lazarus Project has contributed to our congegational development. Sunday morning attendance, which averaged 6-12 when I came on staff, now averages 45-50, and 85 members and friends can easily be identified. Of course we reach out to more than that in counseling, social action, and other areas of ministry. The Wednesday night Bible Study started with a faithful four meeting regularly for months before we began growing and now enjoy 15-20 in attendance. The Session has been increased in size from 4 to 6; and a board of 6 deacons has been created. And we acquired someone I consider an "unpaid staffperson"--a Treasurer and bookkeeper, invaluable in an aid-receiving church with several projects separately budgeted and funded. His name is Lynn McClary. Finally, the congregation itself represents an interesting mix of theological and biblical liberals and conservatives.

The interiors of the buildings have been repainted and are kept in a cleaner condition on a volunteer basis. Broken or missing windows have been repaired; the water fountain, furnace, garbage disposal, a toilet, outside lights, and other items have been repaired. The courtyard and other gardens have blossomed with poppies, irises, geraniums and a variety of other flowers and exotic succulents with the care of two volunteer gardeners and a variety of helpers. During the summer last year, we even had our own "victory garden" with squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, sunflowers and one giant pumpkin.

Financially the congregation is in better shape. Ross's salary had perpetually been at least a month behind and many bills went unpaid: now all salaries are kept up to date, current bills paid, and all past old bills have been paid. In addition, we raised nearly $5000 last year

for the support of Lazarus at the local level through a variety of fundraisers, personal giving, and the Lazarus Sustaining Community. You are encouraged to join the latter, particularly to help us as Mission Development Committee funding dramatically decreases this year and perhaps disappears altogether next year unless Lazarus is granted an extension. See the last page of this article for guidance as to how to join.

The Elders have become involved at presbytery and synod levels. Representatives regularly attend presbytery meetings. One Elder has become a member of the Social and Ecumenical Concerns Committee (SECO) of Pacific Presbytery, and now serves as the Committee's representative to Synod SECO. In the past two years, two of our Elders have been elected commissioner alternates to General Assembly.

Ross Greek retires on Easter Sunday, April 6. Several of his concerns will be continued through folk brought in through Lazarus. An attorney in the congregation who has served in the Peace Corps and has done draft counseling will continue to keep West Hollywood Presbyterian active as Presbytery's designated Peace Center and be available for draft counseling. The fellow who has motivatedthe church to get involved in prison ministry will continue our concern for criminal justice and prison reform. And two nongay women, one an Elder, the other a Deacon and member of the Lazarus Steering Committee, will continue to serve on the Board of Directors of the Mary Magdalene House. We will be neatly picking up where Ross has left off. Ross, of course, will be moving on to new forms of ministry in his retirement.

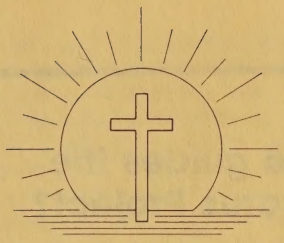
Let me add a personal note here. Were it not for Ross Greek and his vision of what the United Presbyterian Church should be doing, I quite seriously wonder how active a Presbyterian I would have remained. His vision included the Lazarus Project; and, more personally, his vision included me as a gay person welcome to join him not only in membership but also in ministry within the United Presbyterian Church. The members and friends of the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church would unanimously agree: like the Christ he follows, Ross has welcomed all of us, regardless of condition or background, to share in the ownership and ministry of the church. (The congregation will be celebrating his ministry over brunch after worship in Fellowship Hall at the church on April 6th, Easter Sunday; and the Presbytery will cele-

Who guides the Lazarus Project?

The Session (Elders) of the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church is ultimately responsible for the direction of this ministry. However, an Advisory Council consisting of representatives from the local church, the Pacific Presbytery and the Synod of Southern California Social and Ecumenical Concerns Commission is consulted bimonthly. In addition, a Steering Committee consisting of participants in the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church gives grass roots advice. The Rev. Ross Greek, Ph.D., pastor of the church, meets frequently with the Lazarus Project Director.

Who funds the Lazarus Project?

In the initial years of the Project, the bulk of the funding comes from the United Presbyterian Mission Development Fund on the national level. A substantial amount of the funding, which will increase yearly, comes from the Social and Ecumenical Concerns Commission of the Synod of Southern California, the Pacific Presbytery, and the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church. Because the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church is a "mission church", already dependent on subsidies from the Pacific Presbytery, it relies on the Director's speaking honorariums, special fundraisers, and other specially designated donations to contribute its share to the Lazarus Project. The funding pays the Director's salary and program expenses.



LAZARUS RISING

How can you help?

You may join the Lazarus Sustaining Community, a group of people who believe in the need for the ministry of the Lazarus Project and have committed themselves to contributing ten dollars quarterly to help finance it. They receive a quarterly one-page newsletter reporting on the progress of the Lazarus Project, as well as enjoy occasional events interpreting the Project designed specially for them. Donations are tax deductible, and checks should be made payable to the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church with "Lazarus Project" written in the memo area. For more information, telephone (213) 874-2853 Wednesday through Saturday.

I would like to share in the ministry of the Lazarus Project by becoming a member of the Lazarus Sustaining Community. Enclosed please find: _____ $10 for this quarter

or _____ $40 for this year

Name _____

Address _____

_____

zip code

Telephone (_____) _____

Mail to: The Lazarus Project
West Hollywood
Presbyterian Church
7350 Sunset Boulevard
Hollywood, California 90046

THANK YOU!

___I WOULD LIKE ___ LAZARUS BROCHURES.
(number)

brate his ministry at its meeting on Tuesday, April 8th.)

Most of the response to the Lazarus Project has come from gay males, though some Lesbians have attended worship or sought counsel from time to time. Some single straight women have been attracted to our congregation because they do not feel pressure from others to get married and do not have to put up with the myth that a single person is not a whole person. Now we are consciously considering ways we might better reach out to nongay folk and women. Most of us began attending the church because we wanted an integrated church--but we have simply outnumbered the original church population!

We are grateful for the support, emotional and financial, of gay and nongay Presbyterians throughout the United States, in Canada and in Europe who believe in our ministry. Many have visited us, and we invited you to do so: Sunday morning worship at 11 a.m. and/or Wednesday night Bible Study at 7:30 p.m. Both are held in the sanctuary, and casual dress is encouraged.

We are also grateful to God, who, through a gracious act in Jesus Christ, calls us from tombs and closets to the abundant life promised all of us as children of God.

An example of the best work of the Lazarus Project comes from one of our conferences on understanding the gay community. Lynn McClary, who learned of the church through his involvement in A.T.-A.A., explained when he first attended he could not have said the name "Jesus Christ" because he had been so alienated by the Church. But, he told the group, that has changed for him through his involvement at West Hollywood Presbyterian. He concluded, "I couldn't like God or other people until I could learn to like myself."